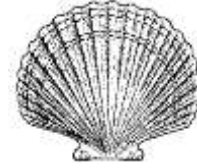


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT
PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND COMMERCIAL
WEATHERVANE SCALLOP FISHERY CLOSURE
EMERGENCY ORDER 2-SF-E-05-13**

The Prince William Sound commercial weathervane scallop fishery will remain closed for the duration of the 2013/14 season.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) biennially assesses weathervane scallops near Kayak Island. Recent surveys have documented a declining trend in weathervane scallop abundance and biomass. The most recent weathervane scallop assessment near Kayak Island was completed in May 2012. The survey of the West Kayak Subsection (WKS) yielded an estimated biomass of 671,735 lb whole weight, the lowest since the area was first surveyed in 1998. Because scallop biomass has continued to decline, commercial scallop fishing in the WKS was closed for the 2012/13 season and will remain closed for the 2013/14 season.

Survey results in 2012 for the East Kayak Subsection (EKS) yielded a biomass estimate of 1,759,638 lb whole weight, a decline of approximately 64% from the 2008 estimate (the last complete survey) and a decline of 74% from the 2006 estimate. This steep declining trend is a cause of concern for the sustainability of weathervane scallops at Kayak Island. Age structure data indicate that 30% of these scallops are aged 7 years or less. This suggests the potential for future recruitment to the fishery. However, this is a modest sign in the face of declining weathervane scallop abundance and biomass. Therefore, the EKS was closed to commercial weathervane scallop fishing for the 2012/13 season and will remain closed for the 2013/14 season.

The next assessment of the weathervane scallops near Kayak Island is scheduled for spring of 2014.

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